

**Constructing a Nation:  
Identity Markers of Armenians**

*(According to the Mshak Periodical Published during 1872-1892)*

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*Wherever the Armenian lives, he becomes a cosmopolite,  
but at the same time remains an Armenian.<sup>1</sup>*

The controversy about national identity in contemporary Armenian society is getting more and more intense. Diverse perspectives and opinions exist on this topic. Some are confident that Armenian national identity coincides with religious identity; some have a strong belief that religion is not an important component of national identity. The recent interview of Archbishop Pargév Martirosyan, the current Primate of the Diocese of Artsakh of the Armenian Apostolic Church (AAC), during which he asserted that a *real* Armenian is only an adherent of the AAC, sparked a major debate on the place of religion in the Armenian understanding of national identity. Some parts of Armenian society criticized this religious interpretation of national identity, asking how this relates to Muslim Armenians - the Hamshen people.

The formation of national identity is a complex process, and in order to have a good understanding of processes relating to debates about the content of national identity in contemporary Armenian society, an analysis of early stage Armenian national identity formation is very important. Paradoxically, no studies have explored how the XIX-century Armenian print media shaped the discourse on the Armenian identity. This article

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<sup>1</sup> Artsruni G., Armenian and Georgian press // Mshak, issue 44, 1877

makes a contribution to the research in the field and attempts to fill the existing gap.

The purpose of this article is to provide an analysis of the early stage of Armenian national identity formation, namely the analysis of identity markers of Armenians as formulated by the liberal Armenian *Mshak*<sup>2</sup> (Cultivator) periodical published in Tbilisi during 1872-1892.

A complex set of the following questions is discussed in the article: Which are the identity markers of Armenians according to the *Mshak* periodical? How do these identity markers correlate? How has *Mshak* defined the function of religion in the formation of Armenian national identity?

Considering the three questions listed above, I will proceed with discussing *Mshak's* understanding of their periodical's role in Armenian society. I will then turn to analyzing the *Mshak* concepts of language and homeland, which were claimed by them to be the main identity markers of Armenians. Finally, I will try to show how *Mshak* perceived the function of religion, particularly the Armenian Apostolic Church, in the nation-building process.

### **Theoretical framework and methodology**

For the purpose of my analysis in this article, I will draw upon the definitions of nation proposed by B. Anderson and A. Smith. Anderson defined a nation as an “imagined” community. He argued that a nation is “imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>3</sup> In his classic work Anderson highlighted the role of “print-capitalism” asserting that “these fellow readers, to whom they were connected through print, formed, in their secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally

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<sup>2</sup> Liberal “Mshak” periodical was established in 1872 by Grigor Artsruni in Tbilisi and was printed until 1920, albeit with interruptions.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson B., *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 2006, p. 6

imagined community.”<sup>4</sup> According to Smith’s definition, a nation is a named human population sharing a historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members.<sup>5</sup> Smith distinguishes between the Western or ‘civic’ and non-Western notions of national identity. The Western model of national identity involves a weak sense of political community, historical territory, legal political community, and legal political equality of the members, a common civic culture and ideology.<sup>6</sup> The non-Western model is an ethnic concept of the national identity which involves genealogy and presumed descent ties, popular mobilization, vernacular language, customs and traditions.<sup>7</sup>

In my research it is relevant to apply M. Hroch’s concept of “patriots.” According to Hroch, patriots are individuals “who formed the vanguard of the national movement” and “who consciously, of their own volition, and over a long period of time, devoted their activities to the support of the national movement, endeavoring in particular to diffuse patriotic attitudes.”<sup>8</sup> He classified “patriots” in three strata: a. the elite sections of the intelligentsia, directly associated with the ruling classes, b. professional groups which, while still outside the wage-labor relationship, did not directly share in political power or engage in economic enterprises (lawyers and doctors, artists, journalists and scientists), c. those who stood in a relationship of wage-labor (private, state, communal officials and clerics, teachers).<sup>9</sup>

Although the periodical was published until 1921, the time span for the study was chosen between 1872 and 1892. The main reason for this choice was the fact that after the death of the periodical’s first editor, Grigor Artsruni in 1892, the periodical published very little information related to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 44

<sup>5</sup> Smith A.D., *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 24

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>8</sup> Hroch M., *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 14

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 16

the issue of national identity due to the lack of a permanent editor in first years after Artsruni's death and imperial politics of censorship.

The articles published during 1872-1892 addressed themes of family and religion, education and religion, women and religion, language and religion, as well as homeland and emigration. I concentrated only on those articles which have a direct connection with nation-building and national identity issues. An analysis of these articles gave me the opportunity to study the perspectives of *Mshak* liberalism concerning their understanding of national identity.

### **Historical framework**

In order to understand the environment in which the liberalism of *Mshak* created its concept of Armenian national identity, we should take history into account.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Armenia and Georgia were incorporated into the Russian Empire. This played an important role for the further social and economic transformation of Transcaucasia. The development of capitalism and the peasant reform in Russia and road construction, developing the communication between the different regions of Transcaucasia played an important role in abolishing serfdom and in the economic development of the region.

The rapid economic transformations caused the formation of an Armenian bourgeoisie which included traders, factory and land owners. As R. Suny stated, the state was favoring the nobility of Transcaucasia, but the growing economic power of the Armenian bourgeoisie was soon reflected in their control of Tiflis municipal politics.<sup>10</sup> The ethnic and social mosaic of Tiflis was the main reason for "defining and redefining the boundaries between ethnicities."<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, the Russian colonial dominance and the policy of the Russian empire to eliminate the cultural peculiarities of Georgians and Armenians had a positive impact on the formation of national consciousness among these nations. However, as Suny rightly noted, "the nationalism among the Caucasian Armenians was not a

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<sup>10</sup> Suny R., *Looking towards Ararat: Armenian in Modern History*, 1993, p.41

<sup>11</sup> Suny R., *The Making of the Georgian nation*, 1988, p.115

‘bourgeois’ creation, but rather an ideology that evolved and was spread by a Russian-educated intelligentsia.<sup>12</sup>

### **Abandoning the Century-long immovability: Adopting the Elements of European Enlightenment**

*Mshak*'s liberal ideology considered journalism, literature, theater and public lectures as the main tools for *diffusion of education*<sup>13</sup> and *national progress*.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the periodical had aimed at having an *impact*<sup>15</sup> on the Armenian community and contributing to the development of the nation. Interestingly, *Mshak* had chosen *merciless self-criticism* as a tool for influencing the Armenian community since they were sure that self-criticism is the only *sign of a nation's ability to change, abandon national flaws and develop*.<sup>16</sup>

According to the *Mshak* periodical, the Armenian community was *impermeable to external influences, as a consequence of being encircled by the Chinese wall of prejudice and ancient traditions*.<sup>17</sup> Abandoning this *century-long immovability*<sup>18</sup> was the only way for developing and making progress. In simpler words, *Mshak* was suggesting that the Armenian community become more flexible and open to change. There were two main ways for Armenians to abandon the *century-long immovability*: either to accept European education by leaving the past and established traditions behind, or to adapt the “*individual peculiarities*” of Armenians, their “*national language and spirit*” to the requirements of European education.

The abandoning of *century-long immovability* and adopting of the elements of European education and enlightenment, namely the openness to the new civilizational flow, ability to perceive, comprehend and put into practice the elements of this new civilization is a sign of a nation's vitality.

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<sup>12</sup> Suny R., *Looking towards Ararat: Armenian in Modern History*, Indiana University Press, 1993, p.70

<sup>13</sup> Artsruni G., *The issue of Armenians' education* // *Mshak*, issue 82, 1877

<sup>14</sup> Artsruni G., *Word or action* // *Mshak*, issue 6, 1877

<sup>15</sup> *You and we* // *Mshak*, issue 2, 1872

<sup>16</sup> *Our biggest enemy* // *Mshak*, issue 40, 1872

<sup>17</sup> *It is required a sacrifice from us* // *Mshak*, issue 45, 1873

<sup>18</sup> *Whose fault is it?* // *Mshak*, issue 14, 1872

If the nation is not able to withstand the *new flow*, and to adopt its peculiarities to the requirements of that new civilization, then it will fade away. It will be a sign that the nation was already “*a dead body*” whose existence was “*ostensible*.”<sup>19</sup> *Mshak* publishers were confident that Armenians will not yield their characteristics when they face the “*light and civilization*.”<sup>20</sup> One of the goals of *Mshak* was preparing Armenians for dealing with the abovementioned “new civilizational flow.” To achieve this goal, the Armenian community was required to have at least a minimum level of literacy, otherwise the activities undertaken by the *Mshak* periodical would be unsuccessful or, as they stated, *a voice in the wilderness*.<sup>21</sup> This is the main reason why the *Mshak* periodical was constantly and insistently propagating for equal educational opportunities, emphasizing the unacceptability of gender discrimination.

The analysis of articles published in *Mshak* show that the Armenian society of that time had a dualistic attitude towards education and European education in particular. On the one hand, individuals representing different strata of Armenian society were striving for education for their children, and on the other hand, the same society was unwilling to give the educated young people a chance to implement their knowledge.

As it was already stated, the *Mshak* periodical had aimed at preparing the Armenian community for adopting elements of European enlightenment and simultaneously preserving essential national features. The initial phase of this process was finding an answer to the question “Who is an Armenian?” Only after answering this question could *Mshak* have the opportunity to develop mechanisms for the correlation of the Armenian nation and the outside world.

According to *Mshak*, the nation rests upon the relationships by tribe or kinship, language and homeland.<sup>22</sup> Paradoxically, the issue of kinship is almost not discussed except for being listed among the identity markers, in

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<sup>19</sup> Artsruni G., *How a nation can be kept?* // *Mshak*, issue 5, 1878

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> *Why don't we understand each other* // *Mshak*, issue 6, 1872

<sup>22</sup> Artsruni G., *Elementary thoughts* // *Mshak*, issue 106, 1880

contrast to which, the function of language and homeland have been emphasized.

### **Language**

A great number of articles published in *Mshak* were devoted to answering the question: “Which elements constitute the identity of the Armenian?” Although Anthony D. Smith states that national identity is fundamentally multi-dimensional and it can never be reduced to a single element,<sup>23</sup> we can deduce from the analysis of the articles published before the mid-1880s that language was the most important and in depth discussed element of Armenian identity during that period. Only after the mid-1880s could we see an evident discussion on the issue of interrelation of language and other identity markers.

In order to understand the driving forces behind the ideas of *Mshak* liberalism concerning national identity, we will discuss the attitude towards the Armenian language among Armenian society, in particular among the Armenians of Tbilisi. A detailed analysis of the articles published in the *Mshak* periodical demonstrates that the majority of Armenians of that time were not paying attention to the issue of preserving their native language. Both the representatives of the upper class as well as ordinary people had a scornful attitude towards their native language. We can draw the conclusion that the vast majority of individuals representing the upper class of Armenian society did not know their native language properly; they were avoiding using the Armenian language in their everyday life. The ordinary people were characterized by *ignorance and bigotry*, to a great extent they did not know the Armenian language (in this case, the ancient Armenian language of church liturgy), but *were fervently praying in the church*.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, in the article published in 1877 under the title “Everything for money” the author declared that Armenians look at their native language “*from the viewpoint of the trader*,” that is to say they perceived their native language as an obsolete language, they levelled it to “*a broken plate or a*

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<sup>23</sup> Smith A.D., *National Identity*, London: Penguin, 1991, p. 14

<sup>24</sup> *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* // *Mshak*, issue 1, 1872

*well-worn dress.*"<sup>25</sup> We need to limit the degree of generalization while referring to the negative attitude of Armenians towards their language, but in all likelihood this attitude was one of the main reasons, if not the main one, that forced *Mshak* to discuss the function of language as an identity marker.

*Mshak's* understanding of the notion of nation and the function of the language for a given nation was not primitive, but straightforward. They were comparing nations with individuals and stating that "*as society is comprised of different individuals, humanity consists of nations*"<sup>26</sup> and "*language is one of the main characteristics and peculiarities of a nation.*"<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in the article published in 1880 under the title "*Armenians and Georgians*" the author stated that "*language is the only certain and lifelong foundation of the nation.*"<sup>28</sup>

Unsurprisingly, *Mshak's* liberalism considered language to not only be an essential part of the Armenian identity, without which an Armenian would never be "*complete, perfect,*" but they also declared that a nation which did not retain its native language yields to the *power of natural evolution.*<sup>29</sup> *Mshak* regarded language as a "*tool for the diffusion of education,*"<sup>30</sup> a *civilizing tool* that would *develop the moral and intellectual peculiarities of national life.*<sup>31</sup> This *tool* should be used for adopting "*European thoughts.*"<sup>32</sup> They were considering national education in Armenian language the only *tool* for progress and adopting the elements of European enlightenment.

It should be noted that when referring to the importance of the language, *Mshak* was talking about the modern Eastern Armenian. They

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<sup>25</sup> Artsruni G., *Everything for money* // *Mshak*, issue 7, 1877

<sup>26</sup> *What is individuality?* // *Mshak*, issue 25, 1872

<sup>27</sup> Artsruni G., *Language and nation* // *Mshak*, issue 28, 1877

<sup>28</sup> Artsruni G., *Armenians and Georgians* // *Mshak*, issue 1, 1880

<sup>29</sup> *Language and Life* // *Mshak*, issue 11, 1872

<sup>30</sup> *Why we don't understand each other?* // *Mshak*, issue 6, 1872

<sup>31</sup> Artsruni G., *Language and nation* // *Mshak*, issue 28, 1877

<sup>32</sup> *Who should we blame?* // *Mshak*, issue 14, 1872



were advocating for abandoning the ancient Armenian language as *it was unable to become a civilizing tool*.<sup>33</sup>

### **Language versus Religion?**

Let us now turn to the question of relation/relevance of language to religion as an identity marker. *Mshak* widely discussed the question of religion and language as elements constituting national identity. Can Armenians consider religion as a part of Armenian national identity, can it be the fundament based on which Armenians can identify who belongs to their national community and who does not? Does language oppose religion? Which one of them has superiority when identifying members of the Armenian nation? Does language or religion have the function to unify different strata of Armenian society? These questions were deeply and profoundly discussed and analyzed by the authors of the *Mshak* periodical.

While discussing the unifying functions of religion and language for Armenians, *Mshak's* liberal ideology was considering the function of religion inferior to the function of language. According to the *Mshak* periodical, in the Armenian society of the time there were “*almost no social ties between the different social classes of the Armenian nation and each class was developing separately*.”<sup>34</sup> The only *tool* that was connecting them was religion. *Mshak* was harshly criticizing this approach and actively advocating for education in Armenian language to be the main link between the different strata of the Armenian nation.

Hence, *Mshak* was criticizing the approach of Armenians of equalizing the notions of nation and religion. According to *Mshak*, the Armenians of the time were not considering the nation as *an organic historical entity*, for them a nation was equivalent to religion or the church. Moreover, in one of the articles, *Mshak's* author argued that there was a stereotypical presentation of Armenian history, that Armenians were *convinced to believe that all the battles that they had fought, all that bloodshed had been devoted not to the idea of protecting the national sovereignty and trampled rights, but because of religion, that is to say to protect the idea of God, to be a*

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<sup>33</sup> Artsruni G., *Language and nation* // *Mshak*, issue 28, 1877

<sup>34</sup> *Why we don't understand each other?* // *Mshak*, issue 6, 1872

*soldier of the Bible*.<sup>35</sup> There was a widespread illusion among Armenians that the nation rests only upon the religion. In contrast to the established approach, *Mshak* was asserting that *nationality rests upon language*.<sup>36</sup> Obviously, *Mshak*'s approach of seeing a unifying function in language, which can be defined as a comprehensive approach, could have given enormous advantages to the Armenian nation, rather than the perspectives emphasizing the role of the religion.

For *Mshak*'s liberal ideology, the glaring flaw of the Armenians of the time was the fact that Armenians did not recognize their compatriots who were the adherents of other religions (i.e. Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Muslim Armenians) as the members of their national community. The Armenian of the time considered himself Armenian *only because he/she belonged to the Armenian Apostolic Church*.<sup>37</sup> *Mshak* had a negative attitude towards this omitting perspective. *Mshak* argued: "*Armenians were not a nation, but a mere sect, because they would consider someone as a member of their nation based on religion, even though he did not speak Armenian and disdained it.*"<sup>38</sup> According to *Mshak*, in the contemporary world *religion is considered to have a secondary position with regard to national matters*;<sup>39</sup> religion and beliefs are purely personal matters which cannot be the characteristics of belonging to a particular nation.<sup>40</sup>

### **The function of organized religion**

As we have already seen, *Mshak*'s liberal ideology did not consider religion as an identity marker of the Armenian nation. Simultaneously, it did not deny the positive impact that organized religion could have on the nation with the proviso that the church stops making adherence to a particular religion the only basis for including or excluding members of the Armenian nation.

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<sup>35</sup> *Religion and Nation* // *Mshak*, issue 24, 1873

<sup>36</sup> Artsruni G., *Armenians and Georgians* // *Mshak*, issue 1, 1880

<sup>37</sup> *Religion and Nation* // *Mshak*, issue 24, 1873/24

<sup>38</sup> Artsruni G., *Armenians and Georgians* // *Mshak*, issue 1, 1880

<sup>39</sup> Artsruni G., *What is the consequence?* // *Mshak*, issue 68, 1877

<sup>40</sup> Artsruni G., *Elementary thoughts* // *Mshak*, issue 106, 1880

*Mshak* considered itself the enemy of ignorance; therefore – the enemy of the ignorant clergy as well. They were sure that through organized religion, the clergy could have a *civilizing impact on ignorant masses*,<sup>41</sup> which is why *Mshak* emphasized the issue of the clergy’s education while referring to a positive impact that organized religion could have on a nation. According to *Mshak’s* viewpoint, people without an upbringing of organized religion would consist only of *educated scoundrels and thieves, enlightened exploiters*.<sup>42</sup>

### **Homeland**

Anthony D. Smith lists a historic territory or homeland among other fundamental features of a national identity.<sup>43</sup> In case of nations, the link with the homeland is real and physical.<sup>44</sup> The homeland has a unique significance for a given nation in view of the fact that it is not a mere fragment of a land but “a repository of historic memories and associations, the place where 'our' sages, saints and heroes lived, worked, prayed and fought.”<sup>45</sup>

The *Mshak* liberal ideology outlines a “homeland” among the other identity markers of Armenians. In the articles published before the mid-1880s, the notion of “homeland” appears in the context of the discussion of issues related to emigration, and only after the mid-1880s do we see a complete body of facts indicating the “homeland” as one of the main pillars of the nation. Indeed, these articles provide tangible ground for considering the “homeland” as one of the bases of the nation, but they leave room for ambiguity as well.

Therefore, there is a contradiction concerning the correlation of the notions of “homeland” and “language” as identity markers of Armenians. We can rightly assert that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to say which one of these identity markers *Mshak* considered at the apex of the

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<sup>41</sup> *The past glory of Armenia* // *Mshak*, issue 98, 1881

<sup>42</sup> Artsruni G., *What do we lack* // *Mshak*, issue 18, 1878

<sup>43</sup> Smith A. D., *National Identity*, p. 14

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p.40

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p. 9

hierarchy of identity markers. The main reason for this confusion was the inconsistency of the authors writing on national identity issues. In this regard, I would like to concentrate on three articles entitled “Elementary thoughts”, “Native language” and “There is no end.” The three above-mentioned articles were published on June 25, October 11, and September 19 1880 respectively. All three articles were written by the same author whose initials were G.A.

In the article “Elementary thoughts,” the author stated that if “*the nation has retained the language, but lost the homeland, it should found a new homeland, otherwise the language will be lost as well. If the nation has a homeland, but has lost a language, the nation can still exist though it will transform into a new nation.*”<sup>46</sup> Further in the article “Native language” the author declares that “*the nation retains its nationality by keeping in practice the native language even if it changes the religion and homeland.*”<sup>47</sup> In the third article entitled “There is no end” he declares that “*if a nation loses its homeland and spreads all over the world, it is not a nation anymore.*”<sup>48</sup> These three quotes are the clear illustrations of the ambiguous system of identity markers that *Mshak*’s liberalism had constructed.

*Mshak* was unable or unwilling to tolerate emigration from the “homeland.” The authors were frequently disapproving and criticizing “*the illusions of the people who believe that they can retain their nation by keeping their church and language without a homeland.*”<sup>49</sup> Notably, they were criticizing the widespread idea that Armenians can establish a new *national center* in any country where they live. Suffice it to say that *Mshak* liberals were declaring that the *people* who justify and tolerate escape from the homeland cannot exist as a *nation*<sup>50</sup>:

### Concluding remarks

The study of *Mshak*’s liberal ideology of the nation building process and identity markers of Armenians that was disclosed in the articles

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<sup>46</sup> Artsruni G., *Elementary thoughts* // *Mshak*, issue 107, 1880

<sup>47</sup> Artsruni G., *Native language* // *Mshak*, issue 165, 1880

<sup>48</sup> Artsruni G., *There is no end* // *Mshak*, issue 181, 1880

<sup>49</sup> *History: They and we* // *Mshak*, issue 29, 1876

<sup>50</sup> Artsruni G., *We are Jews as well* // *Mshak*, issue 37, 1876

published in the Tbilisi-based liberal Armenian periodical during 1872-1892 revealed an interesting trend of the vigorous attempts undertaken by *Mshak* to redefine Armenian national identity. The study also revealed that *Mshak* was advocating for abandoning the rigorous and uncompromised adherence to obsolete prejudices and ancient traditions. In contrast, they were suggesting to adapt elements of European enlightenment while simultaneously preserving “essential” national peculiarities.

From a theoretical point of view, we can apply M. Hroch’s concept of “patriots” to the empirical example of *Mshak*’s liberalism. Obviously, *Mshak*’s authors were the ones, as Hroch has defined, “who consciously devoted their activities to the support of the national movement, endeavouring in particular to diffuse patriotic attitudes”.

*Mshak* periodical has emphasized the function of language and homeland as the main identity markers of Armenians. Interestingly, *Mshak* was considering the language not only *the certain and lifelong foundation of the nation* but also the *tool* for adopting the elements of European enlightenment.

*Mshak* had listed *actual and physical* homeland as defined by Anthony D. Smith as one of the main components of Armenian nationality. There is a contradiction concerning the correlation of the notions of “homeland” and “language” as identity markers of Armenians. Since the analysis of the published articles revealed the inconsistency of the authors writing about national identity issue, it is practically impossible to define which one of two main identity markers, that is to say language and homeland, *Mshak* considered to reside at the apex of the identity markers’ hierarchy.

Additionally, *Mshak* had deeply and profoundly discussed the popular perception that being Christian, adherent of Armenian Apostolic Church in particular, is one of the core elements of Armenian identity. *Mshak* liberalism was criticizing the approach of Armenians to equalize the notions of nation and religion. Moreover, they did not perceive religion as main unifying force for Armenians; rather they were emphasizing the unifying functions of language.

**Հայերի ինքնության ցուցիչները ըստ «Մշակ»  
պարբերականի (1872-1892թթ.)**

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Ազգային ինքնության կազմավորումը բարդ և բազմաբաղադրիչ գործընթաց է: Ժամանակակից հասարակությունում առկա ինքնության բաղադրիչների վերաբերյալ քննարկումները խորապես ընկալելու համար անհրաժեշտ է հայերի ազգային ինքնության կազմավորման վաղ շրջանի վերլուծություն: Այս հոդվածի նպատակն է վերլուծել Թիֆլիսում տպագրված «Մշակ» պարբերականում (1872-1892թթ.) հայերի ինքնության ցուցիչների մասին քննարկումները: Հոդվածում ներկայացվում է «Մշակ» պարբերականի հոդվածագիրների և խմբագրի ընկալումը հայ հասարակությունում պարբերականի դերի վերաբերյալ: Այնուհետև ներկայացվում են հայրենիքի և լեզվի հայեցակարգերը, որոնք, ըստ «Մշակ» պարբերականի, հայերի ինքնության հիմնական ցուցիչներն էին: Հոդվածում նաև քննարկվում է ազգային ինքնության ձևավորման գործընթացում կրոնի գործառույթի վերաբերյալ «Մշակ» պարբերականի ընկալումը: